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COUNTRY Germany (Soviet Zone)

REPORT NO.

TOPIC Laerz Airfield

EVALUATION see below

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DATE OF CONTENT 22 February to 15 March 1952

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DATE PREPARED

10 April 1952

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PAGES 3 ENCLOSURES AND 2 TYPES

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REMARKS

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1. On the morning of 1 March 1952, 43 type-29 and MIG-15 aircraft, 2 single-engine low-wing monoplanes, 2 biplanes and 1 large transport plane were parked in the southern portion of Laerz airfield. A radio installation consisting of a wooden cabin and two masts each of them 8 to 10 meters high was observed about 250 meters east of kilometer marker 4.6 on the Recklin-Hilrow highway. The top of one of the two radio masts was fitted with a cross rod. A radio installation of the same type was located north of the eastern end of the runway. A board fence about 2 meters high was being erected along the boundary of the field by the railroad line to the west. The fence had a gap in line with the runway. The fence continues as a wire fence toward the east. Flight officers have been observed wearing caps with gold-braided visors. The visors were similar to those formerly worn by German naval officers. Truck [redacted] was seen.

2. About 1 p.m. on 8 March, 21 type-29 and MIG-15 aircraft were counted from the eastern edge of the field, while the types of 12 other aircraft could not be determined. Flying began on 9 a.m. and continued until about 9:30 p.m. Trucks [redacted] were seen.

3. Between 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on 6 March, 22 swept-back jet fighters and 2 single-engine aircraft were counted at the field. However, not all the aircraft parked on the landing field could be observed. There was flying with jet fighters after 9 a.m. Four jet fighters took off at 10:20 a.m. The planes practiced flying in formations of two near the field. Two radio trucks were observed at the eastern end of the runway.

4. Between 4 and 6 and 8:30 and 10:15 p.m. on 7 March, 32 swept-back jet fighters were counted at the field. However, not all of the planes parked there could be seen. The weather was fair. At about 4 p.m., 6 MIG-15s took off for a formation flight of 20 to 25 minutes duration. Flying continued until about 11 p.m. The runway was illuminated by a searchlight when planes took off or landed. Seventeen white lamps were in operation on the north side of the runway. Between 3 and 5 p.m. on 8 March, about 30 swept-back jet fighters were parked at the field. Sedan [redacted] was seen.

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5. According to a German worker employed at the field, 13 railroad tank cars arrived on the spur track of the installation. (1) No crated jet aircraft were observed. About six wooden shelters, each for one jet fighter, were being erected in the aircraft dispersal areas southeast of the flight control station.

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6. At 2:20 p.m. on 1 March, a twin-engine low-wing monoplane fitted with a tail wheel and double rudder assembly took off from the field heading south. At 4:30 p.m. on 2 March, 37 type-29 and MiG-15 aircraft, 4 single-engine, low-wing monoplanes fitted with radial engines, 1 twin-engine monoplane also fitted with radial engines, 2 biplanes and one single-engine, high-wing monoplane were observed from the western side of the installation. Between 9:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. on 5 March and 7:30 a.m. and 10 p.m. on 6 March there was almost continuous flying by swept-back jet fighters. Groups of 4 MiG-15s would take off in short succession for formation flying. In most cases the formations were not established until the planes had circled the field for the third time. The aircraft landed individually. On 6 March, these formation flights were practiced after dark using position lights. At 8 a.m. on 7 March, the same number of aircraft was observed at the field as on 2 March. At 7:57 a.m. a MiG-15 took off while 2 MiG-15s and a type-29 plane took off at 8 and 8:05 a.m. respectively. Maintenance work was being done on several MiG-15s. The rear section of the fuselage had been removed from these aircraft. One type-29

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7. The construction of the board fence was completed on 4 March. Work on the wire fence, which was completed except for a small portion in the northwestern corner of the field, was not continued. It was generally believed by the local population that new Soviet Air Force soldiers had moved to the Rechlin restricted area in mid-February. Many new faces were seen and the number of rapes and molestations committed by the soldiers against the civilian population went up. It was not yet clear whether the unit previously stationed in Rechlin had been replaced or only reinforced.

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8. On 8 and 10 March, there was flying by MiG-15s and twin-engine, low-wing monoplanes. At 2:30 p.m. on 9 March, 38 MiG-15s, 4 single-engine, low-wing monoplanes, 2 twin-engine, low-wing monoplanes and 3 biplanes were counted at the field. At 12:25 p.m. on 10 March, 9 twin-jet bombers crossed the field heading southwest for the bomb range in Jadow. (3) At 1:25 p.m. on 14 March, MiG-15s took off. MiG-15s took off at 1:39 p.m., 6 MiG-15s each took off at 1:30 and 1:35 p.m., while 3 MiG-15s took off at 6:45 p.m. There was night flying by single-engine low-wing monoplanes. At 8 a.m. on 15 March, a formation of 20 MiG-15s took off heading west. At 9 a.m. jet fighters with crews of two landed.

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9. During the month of February, a total of 22 boxcars loaded with tool boxes of all kinds arrived in the Rechlin restricted area. In early February, one flatcar with side racks loaded with a field kitchen and a truck were dispatched from the restricted area to Parchim.

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20. At 10:30 a.m. on 1 March, aircraft observed at the field included 15 jet fighters parked along the canal, 17 near the flight control station and 8 in the area reserved for the alert flight. No other aircraft were seen at the field. With regard to the starting of the engines of jet fighters source observed that the cable of the starter carriage is inserted into the fuselage near the wing root. The carriage with the two containers similar to oxygen tanks approached the aircraft only when they were about to fly at high altitudes. These carriages were not employed when the aircraft took off for local flights. Although the snow had reached a thickness of about 6 cm flying activities continued. The snow was not cleared nor was the runway sanded. It appeared that the aircraft taking off were in no way impaired by the snow. Except for a stretch of about 500 meters to the north of the field, the fence around the installation was completed. (L)

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[REDACTED] Comments.

- (1) These 13 railroad tank cars were not reported by the sources employed at the Central Railroad Tank Car Distribution Point Berlin. Since source of the present report is in a position to know, it must be assumed that the sources employed at the railroad tank car distribution point do not cover all railroad tank car shipments.
- (2) It is believed that the new personnel observed in Lechlin were replacements for the ground units of the fighter regiments in Laerz. It appears improbable that these units have been reinforced; it is believed that they have always been up to authorized strength.
- (3) Bomb practices at the Gadow-Roscow bomb range were also observed by other sources in March. [REDACTED] Units of the northern bomber division, which also practiced in Gadow-Roscow last year, were probably involved.
- (4) The report confirms previous information on the occupation of Laerz airfield. Two fighter regiments are stationed there. This is confirmed by another source and on the basis of fuel shipments dispatched to the OATBs of two regiments. [REDACTED] Judging by the maximum number of slightly more than 40 MiG-15s observed during the last two months, it is inferred that the two regiments at the field are not fully equipped with aircraft. Hangars or dispersal areas where planes could be kept out of sight do not exist at the field. Of the numbers on aircraft mentioned in the present report [REDACTED] were also reported by other sources.

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